

True existence and inherent existence
according to the buddhist tenet systems

All external phenomena
are truly existent.

Vaibashika

Sautrantika

All phenomena
are inherently existent.

All external phenomena
lack true existence.

Chittamatra

Svatantrika
Madhyamika

Prasangika
Madhyamika

External phenomena lack true existence because there is nothing that exists external to consciousness. However, impermanent phenomena and emptiness are truly existent, while permanent phenomena—other than emptiness—lack true existence.

All phenomena lack true existence because they depend on a correct consciousness (a mind that is unmistaken with regard to its main object); in order to exist, a phenomenon must appear to such a consciousness.

The lack of true existence and the lack of inherent existence are equivalent. Therefore, all phenomena lack true existence.

All phenomena
are inherently existent.

All phenomena
are inherently existent.

All phenomena
lack inherent existence.